

UNESCO's 'City of Literature' tag

March 30, 2022

In news– Recently, the states **Kerala and West Bengal Kolkata** have demanded for the UNESCO's 'City of Literature' tag.

Key updates-

- Noted poets from **Kolkata** demanded that it should be the first Indian 'city of literature'.
- **Kozhikode** was proposed by the Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA) to be branded as a 'City of Literature' with the help of UNESCO.
- It is among the six places that the KILA plans to develop as 'Creative Cities'.
- Thiruvananthapuram is vying for the title 'City of Peace', Kollam 'City of Biodiversity', Kochi 'City of Design', Thrissur 'City of Learning', and Kannur 'City of Craft and Folk Arts'.

About the City of Literature' tag-

- **UNESCO's City of Literature programme is part of a wider Creative Cities Network** which was **launched in 2004** and is currently made up of 246 UNESCO Creative Cities globally.
- Members are drawn from more than 72 countries and cover **seven creative fields: Crafts & Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Music, and Media Arts.**
- The Network was born out of **UNESCO's Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity initiative**, which was created in **2002.**
- **The Creative Cities Network's aim is to** "promote the social, economic and cultural development of cities in both the developed and the developing world."
- The cities in the network promote their local creative

scene and conform to UNESCO's goal of fostering cultural diversity.

- They recognise past, present and future: a strong cultural heritage, a vibrant and diverse contemporary cultural scene, and aspirations to extend culture to the next generation at home and to other cities in a global partnership.
- **The UNESCO Cities of Literature covers a network of 39 cities representing 6 continents and 28 countries**, and a combined population of over 26 million.
- **In 2004, Edinburgh became the first literary city.** It hosts the annual International Book Festival and has its own poet laureate—the Makar.
- **To be approved as a City of Literature, cities need to meet a number of criteria set by UNESCO.**
- Designated UNESCO Cities of Literature share similar characteristics:
 - Quality, quantity and diversity of publishing in the city.
 - Quality and quantity of educational programmes focusing on domestic or foreign literature at primary, secondary and tertiary levels.
 - **Literature, drama and/or poetry** playing an important role in the city.
 - **Hosting literary events and festivals** which promote domestic and foreign literature.
 - **Existence of libraries, bookstores and public or private cultural centres** which preserve, promote and disseminate domestic and foreign literature.
 - **Involvement by the publishing sector in translating literary works** from diverse national languages and foreign literature.
 - **Active involvement of traditional and new media in promoting literature** and strengthening the market for literary products.
- Cities submit bids to UNESCO and **the designations are**

monitored and reviewed every four years by the organization.